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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [UK](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [EG](#) [OVIP](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DAVID WELCH'S VISIT

REF: CAIRO 5429

1. Assistant Secretary David Welch's statements following a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit received straightforward, lengthy inside-page coverage in almost all Egyptian dailies on July 17, 2005. The coverage stressed Egyptian-U.S. cooperation on the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, as well as Welch's statements on the dispatch of ambassadors to Iraq and U.S. consideration of Hamas as a terrorist organization. End summary.

2. Leading pro-government Al Ahram's (circulation: 750,000) coverage was headlined, "Welch says after meeting with the FM: Egypt and the U.S. work strongly on the implementation of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Aboul Gheit calls for no escalation in the Palestinian territories and commitment to the Sharm understandings." The story quoted the entire press conference where Welch emphasized, "there are fifty countries represented in Iraq and terrorism is attacking everyone." He was also quoted as denying any U.S. intention to have contacts with Hamas "because it is a terrorist organization."

3. Pro-government Al Akhbar's (circulation: 750,000) headline read, "Aboul Gheit discusses regional developments with U.S. Assistant Secretary. There is need for a clear vision on the post-withdrawal from Gaza."

4. Small circulation pro-government Al Gomhuriya's (circulation: 200,000) report was entitled, "Welch says after meeting with Aboul Gheit: Egyptian-U.S. relations are strategic and they work to achieve stability in the region. FM (Abul Gheit) conveyed to the American envoy Cairo's concern over the Israeli-Palestinian clashes."

5. Leading opposition Al Wafd's front-page coverage stressed, "Welch refuses to explain the reasons for having an office for the National Democratic Institute in Egypt."

6. Independent daily Nahdet Masr (circulation: 20,000) brief, front-page coverage carried the headline, "Welch says no contacts with Hamas. He reiterated his accusations of terrorism against it."

Corbin